

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CF, XA, XJ
SUBJ: AFRICA POLICY, REGIONAL STABILITY WHILE THE CONTINENT MATURES

REF: STATE 153145

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S LETTER AND TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE AFRICAN SECURITY SYSTEM. WE EMPHATICALLY AGREE THAT THE OAU HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE AS A PEACE MAKING INSTRUMENT. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT, PROSPECTS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT IN THE OAU APPEAR BLEAK, BUT THAT OUGHT NOT PREVENT US FROM ENCOURAGING AFRICAN LEADERS TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN INSTITUTIONS.

2. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS A PARALLEL OR EVEN GREATER EFFORT BE MADE ON A REGIONAL BASIS. EAST AFRICA, FOR EXAMPLE, STILL MAKES GOOD SENSE AS AN ECONOMIC UNIT INQ-SEATED ENMITIES, BUT INDIVIDUALS FEEL SOME INFINITIES FOR ONE ANOTHER WHEN CONFRONTED BY OUTSIDE POWERS OF INFLUENCES. SOME OF THE MORE PRESCIENT SOMALIS WE TALK WITH AND AT LEAST ONE SENIOR KENYAN DIPLOMAT HAVE AFFIRMED THAT ANY LONG TERM ARRANGEMENT FOR EAST AFRICA MUST INCLUDE A CONFEDERATION WITH SUPRA-NATIONAL AUTHORITY. A PACIFIED EAST AFRICA ALSO OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE OF AN EARLY SOVIET/CUBAN DEPARTURE FROM

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ETHIOPIA.

3. UNTIL SUCH TIME AS REGIONALISM CAN FLOWER, THE US MAY FACE DIFFICULT AND OFTEN UNPALATABLE OPTIONS AS THE PRICE TO BUY TIME AND INTERIM STABILITY. WHEN NATIONS ARE FACED WITH SECURITY PROBLEMS ON THEIR OWN BORDERS, THEY MAY BE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO FOCUS ON

BROADER REGIONAL OR CONTINENTAL PROBLEMS. THE RHETORIC OF AFRICAN DIPLOMATS IN THE UNITED NATIONS, THE OAU AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA IS NOT ALWAYS A USEFUL GUIDE TO THE IMMEDIATE ASPIRATIONS OF THEIR LEADERS. WE SUSPECT EACH NATION OR GROUP OF NATIONS LOOKS NOW TO A SOPHISTICATED OUTSIDE SPONSOR OR ALLY, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO SEE A U.S. BIG-BROTHER RELATIONSHIP ACROSS THE BOARD, BUT WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO CONCERT WITH OUR CLOSET ALLIES, REACH UNDERSTANDINGS ON AREAS OF CONCERN, AND THEN SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN TIME OF CRISIS. IN GOOD TIME THE AFRICAN NATIONS WILL EMERGE AS MATURE STATES, BUT FOR MOST OF THEM THIS IS STILL A DISTANT GOAL.

4. THE EMBASSY STRONGLY BELIEVES THE AFRICANS WILL LOOK TO THE UNITED STATES FOR DEEDS AS WELL AS RHETORIC DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS. IT IS WELL TO HAVE A GOAL OF EXCLUDING OUTSIDE INFLUENCES AND CONDEMNING SOVIET AND CUBAN INTERVENTION. SO LONG AS THE ANGOLAN AND ETHIOPIAN EXAMPLES STAND, HOWEVER, AN AFRICAN LEADER IN TROUBLE WITH DISSIDENTS OR NEIGHBORS IS LIKELY TO RING FOR THE SOVIET FIRE BRIGADE. HE KNOWS THE KREMLIN ANSWERS THE ALARM. HE MAY HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE US AND THE WEST.
VOUGHT

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